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Message Text

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53
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
---------- 001950
P 161714Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5645
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 15933

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, ELRG, LY
SUBJ: DISPUTE BETWEEN OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM COMPANY AND
GOVERNMENT OF LIBYA
REF: STATE 245716

1. WE HAVE BEEN EXCHANGING INFO DAILY WITH FCO LIBYAN DESK RE LARG DISPUTE WITH OCCIDENTAL SINCE IT STARTED AFFECTING PERSONNEL. MORNING OCTOBER 16 WE REVIEWED LATEST DEVELOPMELTS AS REPORTED BY TRIPOLI'S 1163 WITH WHEELER, ASSISTANT HEAD OF FCO NEAR EAST-NORTH AFRICA DEPARTMENT, AND ALSO RAISED ISSUE OF FURTHER MEASURES AS PER REFTEL WITH WHEELER AND IN BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY WEIR.

2. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, OCCIDENTAL'S LONDON OFFICE HAS SOUGHT TO DRAU HMG INTO THE DISPUTE BY STREAM OF COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING POSITION OF BRITISH EMPLOYEES OF OCCIDENTAL IN LIBYA. FCO HAS SO FAR RESISTED BEING DRAWN IN ON ANY BASIS OTHER THAN AN OSTENSIBLY CONSULAR LEVEL. BRITISH FEEL THEY HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS WITH LIBYA AT PRESENT; THIS WEEK FCO REGULAR LIBYAN DESK OFFICER IS ON MISSION TO TRIPOLI TO ATTEMPT TO STRAIGHTEN OUT LONGSTANDING FINANCIAL DISPUTE BETWEEN HMG AND LARG. FCO ALSO FINDS INFORMATION BEING SUPPLIED TO IT BY OCCIDENTAL HERE SOMEWHAT CONFUSING AND APPARENTLY EXAGGERATED. OCCIDENTAL
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INFORMED THE DCO THAT SIX OF ITS UK EMPLOYEES DID LEAVE

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LIBYA ON OCTOER 14. MEANWHILE, THE BRITISH EMBASSY AT TRIPOLI REPORTED TO THE FCO THAT TWO UK OCCIDENTAL EMPLOYEES WERE TURNED BACK ON OCTOBER 14, BUT THAT ONLY ONE OF THEM CMNTACTED THE UK EMBASSY AND HE DID NOT SEEK CONSULAR ASSISTANCE.

3. BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN TRIPOLI HAS IN MESSAGE TO FCO LISTED THREE PARTICULAR AREAS IN WHICH HE RECOMMENDS RESPECTIVE EMASSY ASSISTANCE COULD BE GIVEN TO US AND UK EMPLOYEES: (A) CASES OF COMPASSIONATE DEPARTURE; (B) CASES IN WHICH EMPLMYEES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE ON A HEAD-FOR-HEAD REPLACEMENT BASIS; AND (C) CASES OF REFUSAL TO ALLOW DEPENDELTS TO LEAVE.

4. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, FCO BELIEVES WE SHOULD PLAY IT COOL, AND KEEP IT AT THE LEVEL OF THE UK EMBASSY APPROACHING THE LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTRY ON A CONSULAR BASIS CASE-BY-CASE IF ANY UK EMPLOYEE REQUESTS ASSISTANCE, RATHER THAN BECOMING INVOLVED WITH THE LIBYAN PETROLEUM AUTHORITIES OL A POLITICO-ECONOMIC BASIS. HOWEVER, THE FCO WOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE MORE FORMAL APPROACH THAN HERETOFORE, AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL, SHOULD IT BE REQUIRED TO PPOTECT UK NATIONALS.

5. FCO UNDERQTANDS TALKS BETWEEN OCCIDENTAL AND LARG IN NEW YORK HAVE BROKEN DOWN. WOULD BE USEFUL FOR US TO BE ABLE TO CONVEY TO FCO DEPT'S UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT STATUS OF TALKS. RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, DISPUTES, PETROLEUM PRODUCTION, EXPLORATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON15933
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750359-0363
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751048/aaaabqdu.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 245716
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DISPUTE BETWEEN OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM COMPANY AND GOVERNMENT OF LIBYA
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, LY, US, OCCIDENTIAL PETROLEUM
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